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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 001554

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NSC FOR E. MILLARD

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [CE](#) [MV](#) [IZ](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: Sri Lanka/Maldives: Mission views on possible reaction to proposed UNSC Resolution on Iraq

Ref: State 256573

(U) Classified by Ambassador Jeffrey J. Lunstead.  
Reasons 1.5 (b,d).

1. (C) In response to Reftel, Mission has the following comments regarding possible Sri Lankan and Maldivian reaction to the proposed UN Security Council Resolution on Iraq.

2. (C/NF) SRI LANKA: Although it is generally pro-U.S. and has not been hostile in any sense toward Coalition operations in Iraq, the Sri Lankan government has not previously expressed an interest in participating in the Stabilization Force, or defraying its costs. While the proposed UNSC resolution would be greeted warmly by the government in public and in private as a sign of international resolve regarding Iraq, we do not believe that the resolution would put it in position to be a contributor due to domestic political considerations. If it was to announce a military contribution, for example, the government fears serious domestic criticism from opposition parties and others that troops would be leaving the country while the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) remain a serious threat despite the ongoing peace process. Such criticism would be made although the Sri Lankan Army -- which badly wants exposure to international peacekeeping operations -- has privately indicated to us that it perceives no problem, vis-a-vis the potential LTTE threat, with deploying perhaps a company to a battalion of troops overseas. In addition, the government would also fear that a proposal to send Sri Lankan troops to Iraq might alienate the country's important Muslim community (seven percent of the population). The GSL's control of Parliament relies in part on Muslim MPs, who are already upset with the direction of the peace process, and we think it would be loathe to offend Muslim sensibilities regarding Iraq. The concern about Muslims, of course, might be obviated if a new resolution leads to the participation of Muslim countries in the Stabilization Force.

3. (C/NF) In terms of defraying costs, while economic indices are looking up due to the ongoing peace process, Sri Lankans are already searching for the elusive "peace dividend" and budget constraints are severe. In light of this, significant GSL monetary contributions to operations in Iraq would almost certainly not be forthcoming. Some sort of token "in kind" contribution might be offered -- several months ago, for example, the GSL offered to send tea. Overall, while Mission believes a quiet diplomatic effort should be made to sound out the GSL re a possible contribution if a UNSC resolution is in the cards, we are not confident that the effort would result in tangible support for operations in Iraq. To some extent, however, Sri Lankan international policy looks to India as a guide and a favorable signal by the GoI to the resolution might have a positive impact on GSL views.

4. (C/NF) MALDIVES: The Maldivian government has not previously expressed an interest in participating in the Stabilization Force, or defraying its costs. While not explicitly negative in its spare public comments, the Maldivian government has not come out in support of the Coalition's efforts in Iraq. Indeed, in the government-controlled press, the GoRM is allowing a fair amount of criticism of U.S. efforts to be aired in the completely Muslim country. Given this situation, we think the proposed UNSC resolution could only help melt the ice with the GoRM regarding Iraq. With a resolution, for example, we believe that the GoRM might even be tempted to provide some sort of token support, such as a medical or radio team, or perhaps some funds if it saw that other Muslim countries were joining in. As the Maldives is a very small country with extremely limited military capabilities, we doubt that it could do more than something relatively modest in size. Nonetheless, if the proposed UNSC resolution is passed, we believe that an effort should be made to sound out the Maldives

regarding possible ways to support the Coalition's efforts. Like Sri Lanka, the Maldivian government also looks to India on international issues, and we think its calculus on this matter would be affected by the Indian government's reaction to some degree.

15. (U) Minimize considered.

LUNSTEAD